



# OESNEWS

*Governor's Office of Emergency Services*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **OES Offers Tips for Californians to Prepare for Forecasted El Niño Winter Weather**

SACRAMENTO – National Weather Service officials have informed the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) that they forecast above average rainfall throughout California in the upcoming winter months due to moderate El Niño conditions. Storms fueled by this El Niño will most likely impact the State January through March 2007.

"Although we don't expect the devastating storms that we've seen in recent winters, we are still encouraging Californians to take steps to protect themselves, their families and their property from winter storm hazards," said OES Director Henry Renteria.

To help residents prepare for the wet winter months ahead, OES is offering the following helpful tips:

**Before the Storm:**

1. Keep insurance policies, documents and other valuables in a safe-deposit box.
2. Check your homeowner's or renter's insurance for flood insurance coverage. If none exists, purchase.
3. Store supplies at work, home and car in handy locations. Essential supplies include:
  - First aid kit and essential medicine
  - Food (packaged, dried, canned or food for special diets and for pets)
  - Non-electric can opener
  - Portable, battery-operated radio
  - Flashlights
  - Extra batteries, stored in water-tight plastic bags
  - Drinking water, stored in closed clean containers. Allow one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days.
4. Keep your car fueled (3/4 to a full tank).
5. Know safe routes from your home or office to high, safe ground.
6. Keep sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber and other emergency building materials handy for waterproofing.

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### **During the Storm:**

1. Avoid areas that are subject to sudden flooding.
2. Do not try to cross a flowing stream where water is above your knees; you may be swept away by strong currents.
3. Do not try to drive over a flooded road; you may become stranded and trapped.
4. If your car stalls, abandon it IMMEDIATELY and seek higher ground.
5. Do not "sightsee" in flooded areas or enter areas blocked off by local authorities.
6. Avoid unnecessary trips. If you must travel, dress warm and advise others of your destination.
7. Use the telephone ONLY for emergency needs or to report dangerous conditions.
8. Stay tuned to local radio or television stations for emergency updates and instructions.
9. If flooding is likely and time permits, move valuable household possessions to the upper floors of your home.
10. If advised by local authorities to leave your home, move to a safe area before access is cut off by flood water.
11. Before leaving, disconnect all electrical appliances, and if advised by your local utility, shut off electric circuits at the fuse panel and gas service at the meter.

### **After the Storm:**

1. Do not turn gas or electricity back on yourself. Rely on utility crews.
2. Do not use fresh or canned foods that have come in contact with flood waters.
3. Follow local instructions regarding the safety of drinking water. If in doubt, boil or purify water before drinking. Have wells pumped out and the water tested before drinking.
4. Avoid disaster areas; your presence could hamper rescue operations.
5. Do not handle live electrical equipment in wet areas. Have equipment checked that has come in contact with water before you use it.
6. Avoid downed power lines and broken gas lines and report them.
7. Use flashlights — NOT lanterns, matches, or candles -- to examine buildings.
8. Stay tuned to radio or television for information and instructions from local authorities.

For more emergency preparedness information, visit [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov). For updates on current weather conditions, visit <http://edis.oes.ca.gov/>

*The Governor's Office of Emergency Services is responsible for coordinating state agencies' response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also tasked with ensuring the state is ready to respond to and recover from natural, manmade, and war-caused emergencies, and for assisting local governments in their emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts.*

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